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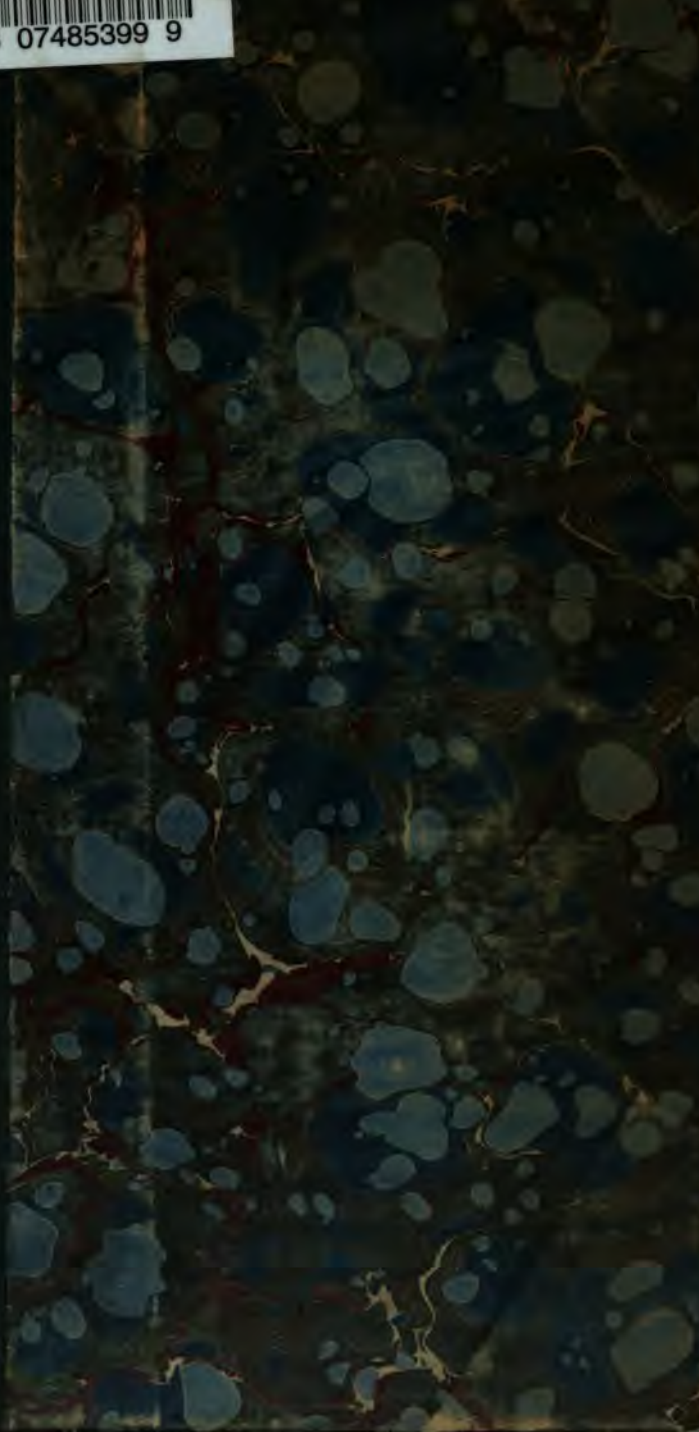
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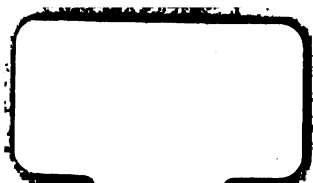
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MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE:

OR, AN

E S S A Y

ON AN

ANCIENT PROPHETICAL
INSCRIPTION,

IN MONKISH RHYME,

Lately discovered near LYNN in NORFOLK.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

TABLE 1

Summary of Data

Year 1950

1951

1952

MARMOR NORFOLCIENSE:

OR, AN

E S S A Y

ON AN

ANCIENT PROPHETICAL
INSCRIPTION,

IN MONKISH RHYME,

Lately discovered near LYNN in NORFOLK.

By PROBUS BRITANICUS.

Printed and Published in the Year M.DCC.XXXIX.

A NEW EDITION,

With NOTES, and a DEDICATION to

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

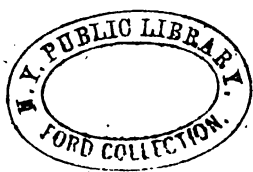
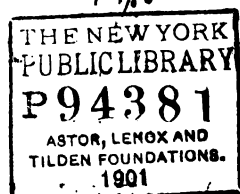
By TRIBUNUS.

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Printed for J. WILLIAMS, N^o 39, Fleet-street.

M.DCC.LXXV.

Repair No. 759/6



TO
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

S I R,

I HAD lately the following curious *Essay* put into my Hands by a particular Friend; which, on account of its great Singularity and Scarcity, I wish to rescue from Oblivion; and I know not how I can more effectually do this, than by connecting it with so great and illustrious a Name as your own; which I hope will not excite your Anger, or incur your Resentment; as it is my Intention to vindicate you from a Charge, that, considering

the Contents of the Essay itself, and your particular political Connections at this Time, may be of infinite Service, if not in augmenting your well-earned PENSION (if that Word give not Offence) yet in preventing any Diminution, or total Abolition of it.

So extraordinary a Performance as the following is, could not fail to excite a very eager Desire of knowing the Author; when, to my great Surprize, it was positively asserted to be the Production of the masterly Pen of Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON.—I remonstrated again and again with my Friend upon the Absurdity of the Surmise; and pointed out innumerable Passages which I thought served to destroy his positive Assertions. This only tended to increase his Prejudices in favour of his own Preconceptions, and confirm me in the Resolution of republishing the Essay, with such Remarks as should invalidate every Argument, and remove every Suspicion that savoured of its being the Production of your Pen: And indeed

indeed I flatter myself that a Shadow of Doubt will not appear of your being the Author of it, when the Whole has been perused and compared with those Two inimitable and unanswerable Pamphlets with which you have obliged your Royal Master, and our most gracious Sovereign, and his able Ministers: I mean the FALSE ALARM, and that most excellent Vindication (intitl'd TAXATION NO TYRANNY) of what the Faction or Whigs (which by your excellent Dictionary we are taught to be one and the same) call the most ominous System of Despotism that this, or any other Free State ever saw planned, and which their fanatical Zeal most religiously reprobates.

I urged in your Vindication, learned Sir! that it was impossible so pointed an Attack on the glorious Revolution; such bitter Reflections, keen Sarcasms, and personal Invectives against the illustrious HOUSE OF HANOVER, which are to be found in the following Essay; could proceed from the Pen of the now renowned Champion for the Ho-

*nour and Glory of One of the House of Brun-
 wick; whose Exaltation to the Throne of
 these Realms has ever been Matter of the
 greatest Distress, Trouble, and Disappoint-
 ment to Tories and Jacobites; neither of
 whom can ever discover Zeal or Attachment to
 any reigning Monarch, unless the Maxims of
 his Government should be the same with those,
 which, in their warmest Wishes, they would
 desire to see the cursed and expelled Race of
 the STUARTS adopt and pursue. This indeed
 may gain a temporary Allegiance, and pro-
 cure an outward Shew of Obedience, as it
 would not only gratify their high-flown ex-
 travagant Notions of hereditary Right and
 unlimited Authority, but afford some distant
 Prospect and Hope, that a Deviation from all
 Principles and Maxims that first, in the
 Opinion of the Whigs, vindicated the Depo-
 sition of the STUARTS, and Elevation of the
 House of Hanover, might, by a happy Train
 of political Consequences, restore the imperial
 Diadem to that Head, round which every
 Jacobite would wish to see it cast its heredi-
 tary*

tary Splendor. No Man can be hardy enough to impute to Dr. JOHNSON *Wishes or Expectations of such a Nature*—more extravagant to his enlightened Mind and loyal Heart, than the *Doctrines of Ghosts and Phantoms, or the Pretensions to Second Sight in the Highlands of Scotland*; a Country whose Poverty and Barrenness you have, as a faithful Historian, described and exposed, though treated with Lettered Hospitality, and partaking of every Convenience that such a Country could afford. Nor could you, Sir, had you those *Predilections in favour of the House of STUART* that some would suggest, have missed so fair an Opportunity of crediting that Country for these illustrious Names that swayed the Sceptre in this,

The surmise, Sir, that you are the Author of the following Essay, could only be designed to tarnish your unblemished Reputation, or prejudice you in the Opinion of your Royal Master; the friendly Rays of whose Favour and Protection have beneficently shone
upon

upon your Merit; not indeed, by its Irradiations, to make it more conspicuous, that were impossible, so unrivalled is your Fame; but to afford his affectionate Subjects indubitable Proofs of his Discernment and Justice, of which indeed the far greater Part of them require no other Evidences than what his Majesty has already afforded.

And though the unsatisfied Humours of some false Pretenders to Patriotism, have risen into Ferments of Opposition; and they have more than hinted at a Breach of the Royal Oath, solemnly sworn at his Majesty's Coronation; and talked of the absolute Treason of Ministers against the State—representing the Measures respecting America, as open, violent, and audacious Breaches of the most sacred Part of the CONSTITUTION; augmenting the utter Destruction of FREEDOM, and Establishment of DESPOTISM: Yet of these ominous Fears and disastrous Conjectures we are happily freed by the late able Vindication

cation of these Measures and Ministers in the late celebrated Piece, intituled, TAXATION NO TYRANNY—wherein the Charge of REBELLION is brought Home against the Americans; and their Struggles for what they call LIBERTY, proved to be the forward Opposition of disobedient Children, and rebellious Insurrections against the PARENT STATE.—We see all their pretended Claims to natural free-born Subjects refuted.—We are peremptorily told by Dr. JOHNSON, that the Americans resigned all Right and Title to the Name, Character, and Immunities of true-born Englishmen, when they insolently fled from Opposition and Tyranny, which here they complained of, and would not patiently endure; and that they denuded themselves of all Rights and just Claims to Privilege and Protection, when their inflexible and pertinacious Folly led them to a Desert; and that the Atlantic washed clear away every Relict of free Subjects.

We

We must now cease to pity their Oppression, because you, Sir, have proved them Slaves; their Complaints must now be deemed the Voice of Sedition, because Dr. JOHNSON declares their Resistance REBELLION.—Let us leave then America to mourn her Fate, which the high-born Spirit of her yet untamed Sons seem determined, if possible, to retard by resolute Opposition and bold Encounter, in which some turbulent and equally rebellious Sons at Home, with anxious and forward Zeal, wish them Success; and congratulate our native Country, that has such a pious and ever-watchful Guardian on the Throne, and such Ministers surrounding it, who are determined at all Events, and at every desperate Hazard, to sacrifice all, even our own Children, before One Branch of the Royal Prerogative shall be lost, the Omnipotence of Parliament questioned, or the Grandeur of the British Empire impaired.

Can

Can it remain a Question, that the strenuous Vindicator of the Honour of the English Crown, now worn by One of the illustrious House of Hanover, is the Author of the Essay in Debate? or that you, Sir, would receive a Pension from that Hand, which, according to the Essayist, must sway the Sceptre of USURPATION? The Degeneracy of the present Times, though the Dregs of Rome, will not allow of a Suspicion that implies such a Profligacy of Mind, Corruption of Manners, and Destitution of Principles.

The Arguments I further urged to disprove the Assertion that you, Sir, was the Author of the following Essay, were, that from the direct Attack upon the Hanover Succession, and Invectives against the illustrious Progenitors of our most gracious Sovereign, it is manifest, that the Essayist was a high-flown Jacobite, and really wrote upon Principle; which he seems openly to avow, by the Signature he assumes of PROBUS BRITANICUS. Now, said I, can the very

Enemies of Dr. JOHNSON suppose that he could have been the Author of the Essay, and yet in so public and daring a Manner renounce every Principle therein adopted and inferred? Can it be imagined that his Probity and Honour were so unstable and pliable as to become the easy Purchase of the first State Corrupter that should assail his Virtue? or is it probable that he should revolt from the glaring Principles of Jacobitism (if ever he had adopted them) which your stanch Tories hold with equal Faith as they do their Bibles, and which they defend with Apostolic Zeal?—If, said I, the Doctor had ever taken up this Creed, I am thoroughly convinced that no Considerations in the World would ever have induced him to discard it: He is pertinacious almost to a Fault; and so fully convinced of his own Tenets, that his best Friends cannot produce One Instance of his Conviction.—All Insinuations that the Doctor's former political Principles leaned towards Jacobitism are refuted by the forward Zeal he has shewn, and
Affection

Affection he has discovered, for his present Majesty and the righteous Administration of his Government. And if the Story be true (which I think much to be questioned) that Dr. JOHNSON once refused to walk in the Royal Gardens because in Possession of an USURPER, yet it does not appear to have been in the present Reign; and the elegant Poem of London, the Production of this learned Man, gives us a true Picture of his Mind, at least in the last.

*Here let those reign whom PENSIONS can
invite*

*To vote a Patriot Black, a Courtier White;
Explain their Country's dear-bought Rights
away,*

*And plead for Pirates in the Face of Day;
With slavish Tenets taint our poisoned Youth,
And lend a Lie the Confidence of Truth.*

*Thus driven out of every strong Hold of
Argument and Defence, my Friend, Sir, had
recourse to those Definitions of PENSION and*

PENSIONER, *which have been so often bandied about, and to be found inscribed on that Colossæan Column of Fame, your Dictionary; and gravely read from it the Two following Articles of your Impeachment.*

PENSION. *An Allowance made to any One without an Equivalent: In England it is generally understood to mean Pay given to a State-hireling for Treason to his Country.*

PENSIONER. *A Slave of State hired by a Stipend to obey his Master.*

These read; with an Air of Triumph, he exclaimed—"Now vindicate the Doctor if you can."—The Word Equivalent gave the Turn to my Plea; and I peremptorily declared, that in the very Sense of the Lexicographer, his Majesty's Bounty to you, Sir, was not a PENSION; since it must first be proved that his Majesty is your Master, and acknowledged such by you; and that you
obey

obey him.—I next urged that you had given him an AMPLE Equivalent for Royal Munificence.—“What!” replied he, with great Quickness, “by giving up in Return, Honour, Character, Conscience, and every “Thing that should distinguish a Man!”

*To such the Plunder of the Land is given,
When Crimes inflame the Wrath of angry
Heav'n!*

Poem of London.

I answered this exclamatory Interrogation only with a Smile of ineffable Contempt.—As to the latter Part of the Description, viz. that a Pension is generally understood in ENGLAND to mean Pay given to a State-hireling for Treason to his Country, I replied—Suppose Dr. JOHNSON, or myself, choasè to take the Words in the Scottish Acceptation of them; and if the Idea of a State-hireling in that Country doth not materially differ from that received in our own, the Idea of TREASON doth, or at least hath done most essentially.

Thus,

Thus, Sir, having I hope fully and unanswerably confuted the invidious Charge, that you are the Author of the following Essay; and put it out of all Doubt, or even a Question, that you can be **PROBUS BRITANICUS**, I humbly take my Leave; careless on whom the Charge or Guilt may fall, now I have exculpated you; for I had no other Design in View than to do Justice to your super-eminent Merit and Abilities, and to shew you to the Public in your true Character; nor am I conscious of the least Tincture of Pride mixing itself with this pure Design; no, not even the most distant Emulation with our gracious Sovereign, whose high Example and illustrious Virtues I hope I shall never have the Temerity or daring Ambition to imitate. In you, Sir, his present Majesty finds a firm, steady, and able Advocate for the House of Brunswick, and consequently deems you as good a Friend as he himself wishes to the glorious Revolution; a Period, the Blessings of which we almost cease to rejoice at, as they
are

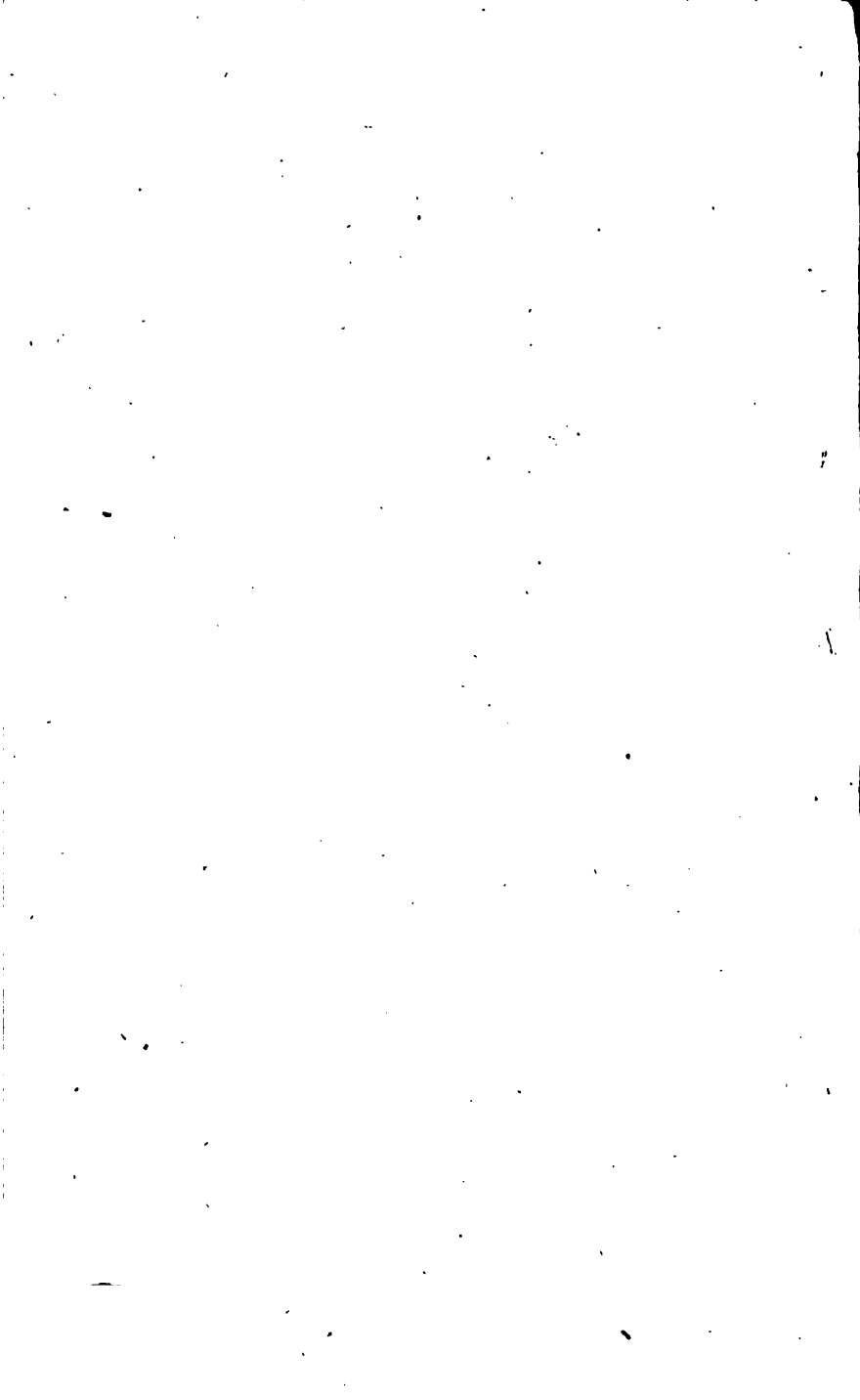
are nearly eclipsed by those manifold Blessings we enjoy under the mild and auspicious Reign of GEORGE THE THIRD; a Prince who hath concentrated in himself such rare Qualities, that I will be bold enough to declare he hath such a Possession of the Affections of the good People of England, and all true Friends of the Constitution, that they cannot love and revere him more.

*I am, with the profoundest Respect,
and highest Veneration,*

Very learned Sir,

*Your most obedient, and
most humble Servant,*

TRIBUNUS.



A N
E S S A Y

O N A N
A N C I E N T I N S C R I P T I O N
D i s c o v e r e d n e a r L Y N N i n N O R F O L K .

IN *Norfolk* near the Town of *Lynn*, in a Field which an ancient Tradition of the Country affirms to have been once a deep Lake or Meer, and which appears from authentic Records to have been called, about Two hundred Years ago, *Palus*, or the Marsh, was discovered not long since a large square Stone, which is found upon an exact Inspection to be a kind of coarse Marble, of a Substance not firm enough to admit of being polished, yet harder than our common Quarries afford, and not easily susceptible of Injuries from Weather or outward Accidents.

A

It

It was brought to light by a Farmer, who observing his Plough obstructed by something, through which the Share could not make its Way, ordered his Servants to remove it. This was not effected without some Difficulty, the Stone being Three Feet Four Inches Deep, and Four Feet Square in the Superficies, and consequently of a Weight not easily manageable. However, by the Application of Levers, it was at Length raised, and conveyed to a Corner of the Field, where it lay for some Months entirely unregarded: Nor perhaps had we ever been made acquainted with this venerable Relict of Antiquity, had not our good Fortune been greater than our Curiosity.

A Gentleman, well known to the learned World, and distinguished by the Patronage of the *Mæcenæ* of *Norfolk*, whose Name, was I permitted to mention it, would excite the Attention of my Reader, and add no small Authority to my Conjectures, observing, as he was walking that Way, that the Clouds began to gather
and

and threaten him with a Shower, had recourse for shelter to the Trees under which this Stone happened to lie, and sat down upon it in Expectation of fair Weather. At length he began to amuse himself in his Confinement, by clearing the Earth from his Seat with the Point of his Cane, and had continued this Employment some Time, when he observed several Traces of Letters antique and irregular, which by being very deeply engraven were still easily distinguishable.

This Discovery so far raised his Curiosity, that going Home immediately, he procured an Instrument proper for cutting out the Clay that filled up the Spaces of the Letters, and with very little Labour made the Inscription legible, which is here exhibited to the Public :

P O S T - G E N I T I S.

*Cum Lapidem hunc, magni
Qui nunc jacet Incola stagni,
Vel Pede Equus tanget,
Vel Arator vomere franget,*

A 2

Sentiet

*Sentiet ægra Metus,
 Effundet Patria Fletus,
 Littoræque ut Fluëtu,
 Resonabunt Oppida Luëtu:
 Nam fœcunda rubri
 Serpent per Prata Colubri,
 Gramina vastantes,
 Flores Fruëtusque vorantes,
 Omnia fœdantes,
 Vitiantes, et spoliantes;
 Quæquam haud pugnaces,
 Ibunt per cunëta Minaces,
 Furës absque Timore,
 Et pingues absque Labore.
 Horrida dementes
 Rapiet Discordia Gentes,
 Plurima tunc Leges
 Mutabit, plurima Reges
 Natio, conversâ
 In Rabiem tunc contremet Ursâ
 Cynthia, tunc latis
 Florebunt Lilia Pratis,
 Nec fremere audebit
 Leo, sed violare timebit,*

Omnia

*Omnia consuetus
Populari Pascua lætus.*

*Ante Oculos Natos
Calceatos et Cruciatos*

*Jam feret ignavus,
Vetitæque Libidine pravus.*

*En quoque quod Mirum,
Quod dicas denique dirum,
Sanguinem Equus sugit,
Neque Bellua victa remugit.*

These Lines he carefully copied, accompanied in his Letter of July 19, with the following Translation :

TO POSTERITY.

*When'er this Stone, now hid beneath the
Lake,
The Horse shall trample, or the Plough shall
break,
Then, O my Country ! shalt thou groan distressed,
Grief swell thine Eyes, and Terror chill thy
Breast.*

Thy

*Thy Streets with Violence of Woe shall sound,
 Loud as the Billows bursting on the Ground.
 Then thro' thy Fields shall scarlet Reptiles
 stray,*

*And Rapine and Pollution mark their Way.
 Their hungry Swarms the peaceful Vale shall
 fright,*

*Still fierce to threaten, still afraid to fight;
 The teeming Year's whole Product shall
 devour.*

*Insatiate pluck the Fruit, and crop the Flow'r:
 Shall glutton on the industrious Peasants Spoil,
 Rob without Fear, and fatten without Toil.
 Then o'er the World shall discord stretch her
 Wings,*

*Kings change their Laws, and Kingdoms
 change their Kings.*

*The Bear enrag'd th' affrighted Moon shall
 dread;*

*The Lilies o'er the Vales triumphant spread;
 Nor shall the Lion, wont of old to reign
 Despotic o'er the desolated Plain,*

*Henceforth th' inviolable Bloom invade,
 Or dare to murmur in the flow'ry Glade;
 His tortur'd Sons shall die before his Face,
 While he lies melting in a lewd Embrace;*

And,

*And, yet more strange! his Veins a Horse
 shall drain,
 Nor shall the passive Coward once complain.*

I make not the least Doubt, but that this learned Person has given us, as an Antiquary, a true and uncontrovertible Representation of the Writer's Meaning, and am sure he can confirm it by innumerable Quotations from the Authors of the middle Age, should he be publicly called upon by any Man of eminent Rank in the Republic of Letters; nor will he deny the World that Satisfaction, provided the Animadverter proceeds with that Sobriety and Modesty, with which it becomes every learned Man to treat a Subject of such Importance.

Yet with all proper Deference to a Name so justly celebrated, I will take the Freedom of observing that he has succeeded better as a Scholar than a Poet; having fallen below the Strength, the Conciseness, and at the same Time below the Perspicuity of his Author. I shall not point out the particular Passages in which

which this Disparity is remarkable, but content myself with saying in general, that the Criticisms, which there is room for on this Translation, may be almost an Incitement to some Lawyer, studious of Antiquity, to learn *Latin*.

The Inscription which I now proceed to consider, wants no Arguments to prove its Antiquity to those among the learned who are versed in the Writers of the darker Ages; and know that the *Latin* Poetry of those Times was of a peculiar Cast and Air, not easy to be understood, and very difficult to be imitated; nor can it be conceived that any Man would lay out his Abilities on a Way of writing, which though attained with much Study could gain him no Reputation, and engrave his Chimæras on a Stone to astonish Posterity.

Its Antiquity therefore is out of Dispute, but how high a Degree of Antiquity is to be assigned it, there is more Ground for Enquiry than Determination. How early *Latin* Rhymes made their
Appear-

Appearance in the World is yet undecided by the Critics. Verses of this Kind were called *Leonine*, but whence they derived that Appellation the learned *Camden* confesses himself ignorant, so that the Stile carries no certain Marks of its Age. I shall only observe farther on this Head, that the Characters are nearly of the same Form with those on King *Arthur's* Coffin, but whether from their Similitude we may venture to pronounce them of the same Date, I must refer to the Decision of better Judges.

Our Inability to fix the Age of this Inscription necessarily infers our Ignorance of its Author, with relation to whom many Controversies may be started worthy of the most profound Learning, and most indefatigable Diligence.

The first Question that naturally arises is, Whether he was a *Briton* or a *Saxon*? I had at first conceived some Hope, that in this Question, in which not only the idle Curiosity of Virtuofos, but, the Ho-

nour of Two mighty Nations is concerned, some Information might be drawn from the Word *Patria* [my Country] in the Third Line; *England* being not in Propriety of Speech the Country of the *Saxons*; at least not at their first Arrival. But upon farther Reflection this Argument appeared not conclusive, since we find that in all Ages Foreigners have affected to call *England* their Country, even when, like the *Saxons*, of old they came only to plunder it*.

An Argument in favour of the *Britons*, may indeed be drawn from the Tenderness with which the Author seems to lament his Country, and the Compassion he shows for its approaching Calamities. I, who am a Descendant from the *Saxons*, and therefore unwilling to say any Thing derogatory from the Reputation of my Forefathers, must yet allow this Argument its full Force: For it has been rarely, very rarely, known, that Foreigners, how-

* The *Scotch* affect this, under these Circumstances, at this very Time.

ever well treated, careſſed, enriched, flattered, or exalted, have regarded this Country with the leaſt Gratitude or Affection, till the Race has by long Continuance, after many Generations, been naturalized and aſſimilated †.

They have been ready upon all Occaſions to prefer the petty Interests of their own Country, though perhaps only ſome deſolate and worthleſs Corner of the World. They have employed the Wealth of *England*, in paying Troops to defend Mud-wall Towns, and uninhabitable Rocks, and in purchaſing Barriers for Territories of which the natural Sterility ſecured them from Invaſion *.

† This perhaps will account for the extraordinary Gratitude and Affection diſcovered by our preſent gracious Sovereign; but the Inuendo, and coarſe Compliment to his Royal Predeceſſors, plainly prove, that this could *not* have been written by Dr. *Johnson*, who is ſo remarkable for Politeneſs and courtly Manners.

* The Electorate of *Hanover* is not remarkable for well-built Towns, fertile Fields, or waving Harveſts.

N. B. Dr. *Johnson* has made the like Obſervations on *Scotland*, in his Voyage to the *Hebrides*.

This Argument, which wants no particular Instances to confirm it, is, I confess, of the greatest Weight in this Question, and inclines me strongly to believe that the benevolent Author of this Prediction must have been BORN A BRITON.

The learned Discoverer of the Inscription was pleased to insist with great Warmth upon the Etymology of the Word *Patria*, which signifying, says he, *the Land of my Father*, could be made use of by none but such whose Ancestors had resided here : But in Answer to this Demonstration, as he called it, I only desired him to take Notice, how common it is for Intruders of Yesterday, to pretend the same Title with the ancient Proprietors, and having just received an Estate by voluntary Grant, to erect a Claim of *hereditary Right* *.

* Could the Defenders of the illustrious House of Hanover ever have pensioned such a Jacobitical Libeller of the first illustrious Heroes of the *Brunswick Line* ?

Nor

Nor is it less difficult to form any satisfactory Conjecture, concerning the Rank or Condition of the Writer, who, contented with a Consciousness of having done his Duty, in leaving this solemn Warning to his Country, seems studiously to have avoided that Veneration, to which his Knowledge of Futurity undoubtedly entitled him, and those Honours which his Memory might justly claim from the Gratitude of Posterity, and has therefore left no Trace by which the most sagacious and diligent Enquirer can hope to discover him.

This Conduct alone ought to convince us, that the Prediction is of no small Importance to Mankind; since the Author of it appears not to have been influenced by any other Motive, than that noble and exalted Philanthropy, which is above the narrow Views of Recompense or Applause.

That Interest had no Share in this Inscription is evident beyond Dispute, since the Age in which he lived received neither

ther Pleasure nor Instruction from it. Nor is it less apparent, from the Suppression of his Name, that he was equally a Stranger to that wild Desire of Fame, which has sometimes infatuated the noblest Minds.

His Modesty, however, has not been able wholly to extinguish that Curiosity, which so naturally leads us, when we admire a Performance, to enquire after the Author. Those whom I have consulted on this Occasion, and my Zeal for the Honour of this Benefactor of my Country has not suffered me to forget a single Antiquary of Reputation, have almost unanimously determined, that it was written by a King. For where else, said they, are we to expect that Greatness of Mind, and that Dignity of Expression, so eminently conspicuous in this Inscription?

It is with a proper Sense of the Weakness of my own Abilities, that I venture to lay before the Public the Reasons which hinder me from concurring with
this

this Opinion, which I am not only inclined to favour by my Respect for the Authors of it, but by a natural Affection to Monarchy, and a prevailing Inclination to believe that every Excellence is inherent in a King †.

To condemn an Opinion so agreeable to the Reverence due to the regal Dignity, and countenanced by so great Authorities, without a long and accurate Discussion, would be a Temerity justly liable to the severest Censures. A supercilious and arrogant Determination of a Controversy of such Importance would doubtless be treated by the Impartial and Candid with the utmost Indignation.

But as I have too high an Idea of the Learning of my Contemporaries, to obtrude any crude, hasty, or indigested Notions on the Public, I have proceeded

† Without yielding in the least to the Suspicion that Dr. Johnson is the Author of this Essay, we may venture to suggest, that perhaps the Doctor's Loyalty may be owing to such a Predilection in favour of Monarchy.

with

with the utmost Degree of Diffidence and Caution, I have frequently reviewed all my Arguments, traced them backwards to their first Principles, and used every Method of Examination to discover whether all the Deductions were natural and just, and whether I was not imposed on by some specious Fallacy *; but the farther I carried my Enquiries, and the longer I dwelt upon this great Point, the more was I convinced, in spite of all my Prejudices, that this wonderful Prediction was not written by a King.

For after a laborious and attentive Perusal of Histories, Memoirs, Chronicles, Lives, Characters, Vindications, Panegyrics, and Epitaphs, I could find no sufficient Authority for ascribing to any of our *English* Monarchs, however gracious or

* I wish, said my Friend, invidiously, that Dr. *Johnson* had proceeded with the same Caution and Diffidence, had reviewed his Arguments, and traced out his first Principles, &c. before he had sent forth into the World his FALSE ALARM, and TAXATION NO TYRANNY.

glorious,

glorious, any prophetic Knowledge or Prescience of Futurity. Which, when we consider how rarely regal Virtues are forgotten, how soon they are discovered, and how loudly they are celebrated, affords a probable Argument at least, that none of them have laid any Claim to this Character. For why should Historians have omitted to embellish their Accounts with such a striking Circumstance? or if the Histories of that Age are lost by Length of Time, why was not so uncommon an Excellence transmitted to Posterity in the more lasting Colours of Poetry? Was that unhappy Age without a Laureat? Was there then no *Young* or *Philips*, no *Ward* or *Mitchel*, to snatch such Wonders from Oblivion, and immortalize a Prince of such Capacities? If this was really the Case, let us congratulate ourselves upon being reserved for better Days, Days so fruitful of happy Writers that no princely Virtue can shine in vain. Our Monarchs are surrounded with refined Spirits, so penetrating that they frequently discover in their Masters great Qualities invisible

to vulgar Eyes, and which, did not they publish them to Mankind, would be unobserved for ever,

Nor is it easy to find in the Lives of our Monarchs many Instances of that Regard for Posterity, which seems to have the prevailing Temper of this venerable Man. I have seldom in any of the gracious Speeches delivered from the Throne, and received with the highest Gratitude and Satisfaction by both Houses of Parliament, discovered any other Concern than for the current Year, for which Supplies are generally demanded in very pressing Terms, and sometimes such as imply no remarkable Solitude for Posterity*.

* Had the Author lived in good GEORGE the Third's Reign, he must have altered his Opinion, as he would have seen *such* Oeconomy in the Prince in the Expediture, and *such* Modesty in the prime Minister in raising the Supplies, with *such* remarkable Solitude for Posterity, that the Happiness of the *present* Age seems almost totally neglected.

Nothing

Nothing indeed can be more unreasonable and absurd, than to require that a Monarch, distracted with Cares and surrounded with Enemies, should involve himself in superfluous Anxieties by an unnecessary Concern about future Generations. Are not Pretenders, Mock-patriots, Masquerades, Operas, Birth-nights, Treaties, Conventions, *Reviews*, Drawing-rooms, the Births of Heirs, and the Deaths of Queens, sufficient to overwhelm any Capacity but that of a King? Surely he that acquits himself successfully of such Affairs, may content himself with the Glory he acquires, and leave Posterity to his Successors.

That this has been the Conduct of most Princes, is evident from the Accounts of all Ages and Nations, and therefore I hope it will not be thought that I have, without just Reasons, deprived this Inscription of the Veneration it might demand as the Work of a King.

With what laborious Struggles against Prejudice and Inclination, with what Efforts of Reasoning and Pertinacity of Self-denial, I have prevailed upon myself to sacrifice the Honour of this Monument to the Love of Truth, none who are unacquainted with the Fondness of a Commentator will be able to conceive. But this Instance will be, I hope, sufficient to convince the Public that I write with Sincerity, and that whatever my Success may be, my Intentions are good.

Where we are to look for our Author it still remains to be considered, whether in the high Road of public Employments, or the Bye-paths of private Life.

It has always been observed of those that frequent a Court, that they soon, by a kind of Contagion, catch the regal Spirit of neglecting Futurity. The Minister forms an Expedient to suspend or perplex an Enquiry into his Measures for a few Months, and applauds and triumphs in his own Dexterity. The Peer puts off
his

his Creditor for the present Day, and forgets that he is ever to see him more. The Frown of a Prince, and the Loss of a Pension, have indeed been found of wonderful Efficacy, to abstract Mens Thoughts from the present Time, and fill them with Zeal for the Liberty and Welfare of Ages to come †. But I am inclined to think more favourably of the Author of this Prediction, than that he was made a Patriot by Disappointment or Disgust. If he ever saw a Court, I would willingly believe, that he did not owe his Concern for Posterity to his ill Reception there, but his ill Reception there to his Concern for Posterity.

However, since Truth is the same in the Mouth of a Hermit, or a Prince; since it is not Reason but Weakness that makes

† This could never have been written by Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON; his Experience would have set the Remark in the following Order: The Smiles of a Prince, and *the Enjoyment of a Pension*, have been found of wonderful Efficacy, to *fix* Mens Thoughts on the present Times and Measures, be they ever so profligate and ruinous, and to *fill* them with Zeal in support of them, regardless of Ages to come.

us rate Counsel by our Esteem for the Counsellor; let us at length desist from this Enquiry, so useless in itself, in which we have Room to hope for so little Satisfaction. Let us show our Gratitude to the Author, by answering his Intentions, by considering minutely the Lines which he has left us, and examining their Import without Heat, Precipitancy, or Party-prejudices; let us endeavour to keep the just Mean, between searching ambitiously for far-fetched Interpretations, and admitting such low Meaning, and obvious and low Sense, as is inconsistent with those great and extensive Views, which it is reasonable to ascribe to this excellent Man,

It may be yet farther asked, whether this Inscription, which appears on the Stone, be an Original, and not rather a Version of a traditional Prediction in the old *British* Tongue, which the Zeal of some learned Man prompted him to translate and engrave in a more known Language for the Instruction of future Ages? But as the Lines carry at the first View a

Reference

Reference both to the Stone itself, and very remarkably to the Place where it was found, I cannot see any Foundation for such a Suspicion.

It remains now that we examine the Sense and Import of the Inscription, which after having long dwelt upon it with the closest and most laborious Attention, I must confess myself not yet able fully to comprehend. The following Explications therefore are by no Means laid down as certain and indubitable Truths, but as Conjectures not always wholly satisfactory even to myself, and which I had not dared to propose to so enlightened an Age, an Age which abounds with those great Ornaments of human Nature, Sceptics, Antimoralists, and Infidels, but with Hopes that they would excite some Person of great Abilities to penetrate farther into the oraculous Obscurity of this wonderful Prediction,

Not even the Four first Lines are without their Difficulties, in which the Time
of

of the Discovery of the Stone seems to be the Time assigned for the Events foretold by it.

*Cum Lapidem hunc, magni
Qui nunc jacet Incola stagni,
Vel Pede Equus tanget,
Vel Arator vomere franget,
Sentiet ægra Metus,
Effundet Patria Fletus,
Littoraque ut Fluctu,
Resonabunt Oppida Luctu.*

*When'er this Stone, now hid beneath the
Lake,
The Horse shall trample, or the Plough shall
break,
Then, O my Country ! shalt thou groan distressed,
Grief in thine Eyes, and Terror in thy
Breast.
Thy Streets with Violence of Woe shall sound,
Loud as the Billows bursting on the Ground.*

*When this Stone, says he, which now lies
hid beneath the Waters of a deep Lake, shall*
be

be struck upon by the Horse, or broken by the Plough, then shalt thou, my Country, be astonished with Terrors, and drowned in Tears, then shall thy Towns sound with Lamentations, as thy Shores with the Roarings of the Waves: These are the Words literally rendered, but how are they verified? The Lake is dry, the Stone is turned up, but there is no Appearance of this dismal Scene. Is not all at Home *Satisfaction* and *Tranquillity*? all Abroad *Submission* and *Compliance*? Is it the Interest or Inclination of any Prince or State to draw a Sword against us? and are we not nevertheless *secured* by a numerous Standing Army, and a King who is himself an Army? Have our Troops any other Employment than to march to a Review? Have our Fleets encountered any thing but Winds and Worms? To me the present State of the Nation seems so far from any Resemblance to the Noise and Agitation of a tempestuous Sea, that it may be much more properly compared to the dead Stillness of the Waves before a Storm.

*Nam fœcunda rubri
 Serpent per Prata Colubri,
 Gramina vastantes,
 Flores Fructusque vorantes,
 Omnia fœdantes,
 Vitiantes, et spoliantes;
 Quanquam haud pugnaces,
 Ibunt per cuncta Minaces,
 Fures absque Timore,
 Et pingues absque Labore.*

*Then thro' thy Fields shall scarlet Reptiles
 stray,
 And Rapine and Pollution mark their Way.
 Their hungry Swarms the peaceful Vale shall
 fright,
 Still fierce to threaten, still afraid to fight;
 The teeming Year's whole Product shall
 devour,
 Insatiate pluck the Fruit, and crop the Flow'r:
 Shall glutton on the industrious Peasants Spoil,
 Rob without Fear, and fatten without Toil.*

He seems, in these Verses, to descend
 to a particular Account of this dreadful
 Calamity;

Calamity ; but his Description is capable of very different Senses with almost equal Probability.

Red Serpents, says he (*Rubri Colubri* are the *Latin* Words, which the poetical Translator has rendered *scarlet Reptiles*, using a general Term for a particular, in my Opinion too licentiously.) *Red Serpents shall wander o'er her Meadows, and pillage and pollute, &c.* The particular Mention of the Colour of this destructive Viper may be some Guide to us in this Labyrinth, through which, I must acknowledge, I cannot yet have any certain Path. I confess, that when a few Days after my Perusal of this Passage I heard of the Multitude of Lady-birds seen in *Kent*, I began to imagine that these were the fatal Insects by which this *Island* was to be laid waste, and therefore looked over all Accounts of them with uncommon Concern. But when my first Terrors began to subside, I soon recollected that these Creatures, having both Wings and Feet, would scarcely have been called

Serpents ; and was quickly convinced, by their leaving the Country without doing any Hurt, that they had no Quality, but the Colour, in common with the Ravagers here described.

As I am not able to determine any Thing on this Question, I shall content myself with collecting, into one View, the several Properties of this pestiferous Brood, with which we are threatened, as Hints to more sagacious and fortunate Readers ; who when they shall find any *Red Animal* that ranges uncontrouled over the Country, and devours the Labours of the Trader and the Husbandman ; that carries with it Corruption, Rapine, Pollution, and Devastation ; that threatens without Courage, robs without Fear, and is pampered without Labour ; they may know that the Prediction is completed. Let me only remark farther, that if the Stile of this, as of all other Predictions, is figurative, the Serpent, a wretched Animal that crawls upon the Earth, is a proper Emblem of low Views and self-interest

base

base Submission, as well as of Cruelty, Mischief, and Malevolence.

I cannot forbear to observe in this Place, that as it is of no Advantage to Mankind to be forewarned of inevitable and insurmountable Misfortunes, the Author probably intended to hint to his Countrymen the proper Remedies for the Evils he describes. In this Calamity, on which he dwells longest, and which he seems to deplore with the deepest Sorrow, he points out one Circumstance which may be of great Use to disperse our Apprehensions, and awaken us from that Panick which the Reader must necessarily feel at the first transient View of this dreadful Description. These Serpents, says the Original, are HAUD PUGNACES, *of no fighting Race*: They will threaten, indeed, and hiss, and terrify the Weak, and Timorous, and Thoughtless, but have no real Courage or Strength. So that the Mischief done by them, their Ravages, Devastations, and Robberies, must be *only* the Consequences of Cowardice in the Sufferers,

ferers, who are harrassed and oppressed *only* because they suffer it *without* Resistance. We are therefore to remember, whenever the Pest here threatened shall invade us, that Submission and Tameness will be *certain* Ruin; and that *nothing* but Spirit, Vigilance, Activity, and Opposition *can* preserve us from the most hateful and reproachful Misery, *that of being plundered, starved, and devoured by Vermin and by [scarlet] Reptiles* *.

*Horrida dementes
Rapiet Discordia Gentes,
Plurima tunc Leges.
Mutabit, plurima Reges
Natio,*

* To impute such Sentiments as these, so highly injurious to the Gentlemen of the Sword, from whose Spirit and Activity Dr. JOHNSON and Lord NORTH expect the total Subduction of *America*, to this ingenious Writer, would be a manifest Injustice and Absurdity. I chuse to mention this particularly, because I should think the Writer's *Nose*, if not his *Life*, would stand but a bad Chance from some of our Military Gentry.

Then

*Then o'er the World shall Discord stretch her
Wings,
Kings change their Laws, and Kingdoms
change their Kings.*

Here the Author takes a general Survey of the State of the World, and the Changes that were to happen about the Time of the Discovery of this Monument in many Nations. As it is not likely that he intended to touch upon the Affairs of other Countries any farther than the Advantage of his own made it necessary, we may reasonably conjecture, that he had a full and distinct View of all the Negotiations, Treaties, Confederacies, of all the triple and quadruple Alliances, and all the Leagues offensive and defensive, in which we were to be engaged, either as Principals, Accessaries, or Guarantees, whether by Policy, or Hope, or Fear, or our Concern for preserving the *Balance of Power*, or our Tendernefs for the *Liberties of Europe*. He knew that our Negotiators would interest us in the Affairs of the whole Earth, and that no State could
either

either rise or decline in Power, either extend or lose its Dominions, without affecting Politics and influencing our Counsels.

This Passage will bear an easy and natural Application to the present Time, in which so many Revolutions have happened, so many Nations have changed their Masters, and so many Disputes and Commotions are embroiling almost in every Part of the World.

That almost every State in *Europe* and *Asia*, that is, almost every Country then known, is comprehended in this Prediction, may be easily conceived; but whether it extends to Regions at this Time undiscovered, and portends any Alteration of Government in *Carolina* and *Georgia*, let more able or more daring Expositors determine.

——— *Conversa*

In Rabiem tunc contremet Urſa

Cynthia,

The

*The Bear enrag'd th' affrighted Moon shall
dread.*

The Terror created to the Moon by the Anger of the Bear, is a strange Expression, but may perhaps relate to the Apprehensions raised in the *Turkish* Empire, of which a Crescent or new Moon is the imperial Standard, by the increasing Power of the Empress of *Russia*, whose Dominions lie under the Northern Constellation called *The Bear*.

—— *Tunc latis
Florebunt Lilia Pratis.*

The Lilies o'er the Vales triumphant spread.

The Lilies borne by the Kings of *France* are an apt Representation of that Country; and their flourishing over wide extended Valleys seems to regard the new Increase of the *French* Power, Wealth, and Dominions, by the Advancement of their Trade, and the Accession of *Lorraine*. This is at the first View an obvious, but, per-
E haps

haps for that very Reason, not the true
 Inscription. How can we reconcile it
 with the following Passage ?

*Nec fremere audebit
 Leo, sed violare timebit,*

*Omnia consuetus
 Populari Pascula lætus.*

*Nor shall the Lion, wont of old to reign
 Despotic o'er the desolated Plain,
 Henceforth th' inviolable Bloom invade,
 Or dare to murmur in the flow'ry Glade :*

In which the Lion, that used at Plea-
 sure to lay the Pastures waste, is repre-
 sented as not daring to touch the Lilies,
 or murmur at their Growth: The Lion,
 it is true, is one of the Supporters of the
 Arms of *England*, and may therefore
 figure our Countrymen, who have in an-
 cient Times made *France* a Desert. But
 can it be said, that the Lion dares not
 murmur or rage (for *fremere* may import
 both) when it is evident, that for many
 Years this whole Kingdom has murmured?

However,

However, it may be at present calm and secure, by its Confidence in the Wisdom of our Politicians and the Address of our Negotiators.

*Ante Oculos Natos
Calceatos et Cruciatos*

*Jam feret ignavus,
Vetitâque Libidine pravus.*

*His tortur'd Sons shall die before his Face,
While he lies melting in a lewd Embrace.*

Here are other Things mentioned of the Lion equally unintelligible, if we suppose them to be spoken of our Nation, as that she lies sluggish, and depraved with unlawful Lusts, while his Offspring is trampled and tortured before his Eyes. But in what Place can the *English* be said to be trampled or tortured? Where are they treated with Injustice or Contempt? What Nation is there from Pole to Pole that does not reverence the Nod of the *British* King? Is not our Commerce un-

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restrained?

restrained? Are not the Riches of the World our own? Do not our Ships sail unmolested, and our Merchants traffick in perfect Security? Is not the very Name of *England* treated by Foreigners in a Manner *never known before*? Or if some *slight* Injuries have been *offered*, if some of our *petty* Traders have been *stopped*, our Possessions *threatened*, our Effects *confiscated*, our Flag *insulted*, or our Ears *cropped*, have we lain *sluggish* and *inactive*? Have not our Fleets been seen in *Triumphat Spithead*? Did not *HOSIER* visit the *Bastimentos*? and is not *HADDOCK* now stationed at *Port Mahon*?

*En quoque quod Mirum,
Quod dicas denique dirum,
Sanguinem Equus. fugit,
Neque Bellua victa remugit.*

*And, yet more strange! his Veins a Horse
shall drain,
Nor shall the passive Coward once complain.*

It

It is farther asserted in the concluding Lines, that the Horse shall suck the Lion's Blood. This is still more obscure than any of the rest; and indeed the Difficulties I have met with ever since the first Mention of the Lion are so many and great, that I had, in utter despair of surmounting them, once desisted from my Design of publishing any Thing upon this Subject; but was prevailed upon by the Importunity of some Friends, to whom I can deny nothing, to resume my Design; and I must own, that nothing animated me so much as the Hope they flattered me with, that my Essay might be inserted in the *Gazetteer*, and so become of Service to my Country.

That a weaker Animal should suck the Blood of a stronger without Resistance is wholly improbable and inconsistent with the Regard for Self-preservation, so observable in every Order and Species of Beings. We must therefore necessarily endeavour after some figurative Sense not liable to so insuperable an Objection.

Were

Were I to proceed in the same Tenour of Interpretation, by which I explained the Moon and the Lilies, I might observe that a Horse is borne in the Arms of *Hanover*. But how then does the Horse suck the Lion's Blood? Money is the Blood of the Body Politic.—But my Zeal for the present *happy* Establishment will not suffer me to pursue a Train of Thought that leads to such shocking Conclusions. The Idea is detestable; and such as, it ought to be hoped, can enter into the Mind of none but a virulent Republican, or *Bloody Jacobite*. There is not *one honest* Man in the Nation unconvinced how weak an Attempt it would be to endeavour to confute this Insinuation. An Insinuation which no Party will dare to abet, and of so fatal and destructive a Tendency, that it may prove equally dangerous to the Author whether true or false †.

† Could the Author of the *FALSE ALARM*, and *TAXATION NO TYRANNY*, be ever supposed to have written this virulent Attack?—No! Conjecture itself is put to Flight.

As

As therefore I can form no Hypothesis on which a consistent Interpretation may be built, I must leave these loose and unconnected Hints entirely to the Candour of the Reader, and confess, that I do not think my Scheme of Explication just, since I cannot apply it throughout the Whole, without involving myself in Difficulties, from which the ablest Interpreter would find it no easy Matter to get free.

Being therefore convinced upon an attentive and deliberate Review of these Observations, and a Consultation with my Friends, of whose Abilities I have the highest Esteem, and whose Impartiality, Sincerity, and Probity I have long known and frequently experienced, that my Conjectures are in general *very* uncertain, *often* improbable, and *sometimes* little less than apparently false, I was long in doubt whether I ought not entirely to suppress them, and content myself with publishing in the *Gazetteer* the Inscription, as it stands engraven on the Stone, without Translation
or

or Commentary, unless that ingenious and learned Society should favour the World with their own Remarks.

To this Scheme, which I thought extremely well calculated for the public Good, and therefore very eagerly communicated to my Acquaintance and Fellow Students, some Objections were started, which, as I had not foreseen, I was unable to answer.

It was observed, first, That the *Daily Dissertations* published by that Fraternity, are written with such Profundity of Sentiment, and filled with such uncommon Modes of Expression, as to be themselves sufficiently unintelligible to vulgar Readers, and that therefore the venerable Obscurity of this Prediction would much less excite the Curiosity, and awaken the Attention of Mankind, than if it were exhibited in any other Paper, and placed in Opposition to the clear and easy Style of an Author generally understood.

To

To this Argument, formidable as it was, I answer'd, after a short Pause, that with all proper Deference to the great Sagacity and advanced Age of the Objector, I could not but conceive that his Position confuted itself; and that a Reader of the *Gazetteer*, being by his own Confession accustomed to encounter Difficulties, and search for Meaning where it was not easily to be found, must be better prepared than any other Man for the Perusal of these ambiguous Expressions. And that, besides, the Explication of this Stone, being a Task, which nothing could surmount but the most acute Penetration joined with indefatigable Patience, seemed in Reality reserved for those who have given Proofs of both in the highest Degree by reading and understanding the *Gazetteer*.

This Answer satisfied every one but the Objector, who with an Obstinacy, not very uncommon, adhered to his own Opinion, though he could not defend it; and not being able to make any Reply, attempted to laugh away my Argument,

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but

but found the rest of my Friends so little disposed to jest upon this important Question, that he was forced to restrain his Mirth, and content himself with a sullen and contemptuous Silence.

Another of my Friends, whom I had assembled on this Occasion, having owned the Solidity of my Answer to the first Objection, offered a second, which in his Opinion could not be so easily defeated.

“I have observed,” says he, “that the
 “Essays in the *Gazetteer*, though written
 “on very important Subjects by the ablest
 “Hands which *Ambition* can incite,
 “*Friendship* engage, or *Money* procure,
 “have never, though circulated through
 “the Kingdom with the utmost Appli-
 “cation, had any *remarkable* Influence
 “upon the People. I know many Per-
 “sons of no common Capacity, that hold
 “it sufficient to peruse these Papers Four
 “Times a Year; and others who receive
 “them regularly, and without looking
 “upon them, treasure them under Ground
 “ for

“ for the Benefit of Posterity. So that
 “ the Inscription may, by being inserted
 “ there, sink once more into Darkness
 “ and Oblivion, instead of informing the
 “ Age, and assisting our present Ministry
 “ in the Regulation of their Measures.”

Another observed, that nothing was more unreasonable than my Hope that any Remarks or Elucidations would be drawn up by that Fraternity, since their own Employments do not allow them any Leisure for such Attempts. Every one knows that Panegyric is in its own Nature no easy Task, and that to defend is much more difficult than to attack; consider then, says he, what Industry, what Assiduity it must require, to praise and vindicate a Ministry like ours*.

* If this had been written by Dr. JOHNSON, it could not have failed long ago to have been turned against him by some of his Adversaries: And indeed it would have been a difficult Thrust to have parried, or a hard Stroke to have borne.

It was hinted by another, that an Inscription which had no Relation to any particular Set of Men amongst us, but was composed many Ages before the Parties, which now divide the Nation, had a Being, could not be so properly conveyed to the World by Means of a Paper, dedicated to political Debates.

Another, to whom I had communicated my own Observations in a more private Manner, and who had inserted some of his own Arguments, declared it, as his Opinion, that they were, though very controvertible and unsatisfactory, yet too valuable to be lost; and that though to insert the Inscription in a * Paper of which such Numbers are daily distributed at the

* The Paper here alluded to, and so frequently mentioned in this Pamphlet, was called the GAZETTEER. It was published at a heavy and unpardonable public Expence for the base Purpose of defending the Measures of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE in Parliament. The best Writers, the JOHNSONS of his Time, were paid and pensioned by Government for their Essays written in Praise of a prostituted Premier and his Tools.

Expence

Expence of the Public, would doubtless be very agreeable to the generous Design of the Author, yet he hoped that as all the Students, either of Politics or Antiquities, would receive both Pleasure and Improvement from the Dissertation, with which it is accompanied, none of them would regret to pay for so agreeable an Entertainment.

It cannot be wondered that I have yielded at last to such weighty Reasons, such insinuating Compliments, and chosen to gratify at once the Inclinations of Friends, and the Vanity of an Author. Yet I should think I had very imperfectly discharged my Duty to my Country, did I not warn all whom either Interest or Curiosity shall incite to the Perusal of this Treatise, not to lay any Stress upon my Explications.

How a more complete and indisputable Interpretation may be obtained, it is not easy to say. This will, I suppose, be readily granted, that it is not to be expected

pected from any single Hand, but from the joint Enquiries and united Labours of a numerous Society of able Men, instituted by Authority, selected with great Discernment and Impartiality, and supported at the Charge of the Nation.

I am very far from apprehending that any Proposal for the Attainment of so desirable an End, will be rejected by this inquisitive and enlightened Age, and shall therefore lay before the Public the Project which I have formed and matured by long Consideration, for the Institution of a Society of Commentators upon this Inscription.

I humbly propose, that Thirty of the most distinguished Genius be chosen for this Employment, Half from the Inns of Court, and Half from the Army, and be incorporated into a Society for Five Years, under the Name of the SOCIETY OF COMMENTATORS.

That

That great Undertakings can only be executed by a great Number of Hands, is too evident to require any Proof; and I am afraid all that read this Scheme will think that it is chiefly defective in this Respect, and that when they reflect how many Commissaries were thought necessary at *Seville*, and that even their Negotiations entirely miscarried, probably for Want of more Associates, they will conclude, that I have proposed Impossibilities, and that the Ends of the Institution will be defeated by an injudicious and ill-timed Frugality.

But if it be considered, how well the Persons I recommend must have been qualified by their Education and Profession for the Provinces assigned them, the Objection will grow less weighty than it appears. It is well known to be the constant Study of the Lawyers to discover in Acts of Parliament Meanings which escaped the Committees that drew them up, and the Senates that passed them into Laws, and to explain Wills into a Sense

Sense wholly contrary to the Intention of the Testator. How easily may an Adept in these admirable and useful Arts penetrate into the most hidden Import of this Prediction? A Man accustomed to satisfy himself with the obvious and natural Meaning of a Sentence, does not easily shake off his Habit; but a rue-bred Lawyer never contents himself with One Sense when there is another to be found.

Nor will the beneficial Consequences of this Scheme terminate in the Explication of this Monument; they will extend much farther: For the Commentators having sharpened and improved their Sagacity by this long and difficult Course of Study, will, when they return into public Life, be of wonderful Service to the Government, in examining Pamphlets, Songs, and Journals, and in drawing up Informations, Indictments, and Instructions for special Juries. They will be wonderfully fitted for the Posts of Attorney and Solicitor General, but will excel above all as Licensers for the Stage.

The

The Gentlemen of the Army will equally adorn the Province to which I have assigned them, of setting the Discoveries and Sentiments of their Associates in a clear and agreeable Light. The Lawyers are well known not to be very happy in expressing their Ideas, being for the most Part able to make themselves understood by none but their own Fraternity. But the Geniuses of the Army have sufficient Opportunities, by their free Access to the Levee and the Toilet, their constant Attendance on Balls and Assemblies; and that abundant Leisure which they enjoy beyond any other Body of Men, to acquaint themselves with every new Word and prevailing Mode of Expression, and to attain the utmost Nicety and most polished Prettiness of Language.

It will be necessary, that during their Attendance upon the Society, they be exempt from any Obligation to appear on *Hyde Park*; and that upon no Emergency, however pressing, they be called away from their Studies, unless the Na-

tion be in immediate Danger, by an Insurrection of Weavers, Colliers, or Smugglers.

There may not perhaps be found in the Army such a Number of Men, who have ever condescended to pass through the Labours and irksome Forms of Education in Use among the lower Classes of People, or submitted to learn the mercantile and plebeian Arts of Writing and Reading: I must own, that though I entirely agree with the Notions of the Uselessness of any such trivial Accomplishments in the Military Profession, and of their Inconsistency with more valuable Attainments; though I am convinced that a Man who can read and write becomes, at least, a very disagreeable Companion to his Brother Soldiers, if he does not absolutely shun their Acquaintance; that he is apt to imbibe from his Books odd Notions of Liberty and Independency, and even sometimes of Morality and Virtue, utterly inconsistent with the desirable Character of a pretty Gentleman; though Writing
fre-

frequently stains the whitest Finger, and Reading has a natural Tendency to cloud the Aspect, and depress that airy and thoughtless Vivacity which is the distinguishing Characteristic of a modern Warrior; yet on this single Occasion I cannot but heartily wish, that by a strict Search there may be discovered in the Army Fifteen Men who can write and read*.

I know that the Knowledge of the Alphabet is so disreputable among these Gentlemen, that those who have by ill Fortune formerly been taught it, have partly forgot it by Disuse, and partly concealed it from the World, to avoid the Railleries and Insults to which their Education might make them liable: I propose therefore, that all the Officers of the Army may be examined upon Oath One by One,

* Considering the *great* Dependence upon the Army, and the *frequent* Reviews which his Majesty delights to take of his Troops, together with Dr. JOHNSON's *present* Pay and *good* Quarters, I wish he would exculpate himself from the Charge of being the Writer of this Pamphlet under his own Hand and proper Signature: I am afraid his Reputation may suffer under my unskilful Vindication.

and that if Fifteen cannot be selected who are at present so qualified, the Deficiency may be supplied out of those who having once learned to read, may, perhaps, with the Assistance of a Master, in a short Time refresh their Memories.

It may be thought, at the first Sight of this Proposal, that it might not be improper to assign to every Commentator a Reader and Secretary; but it may be easily conceived, that not only the Public might murmur at such an Addition of Expence, but that by the Unfaithfulness or Negligence of their Servants, the Discoveries of the Society may be carried to foreign Courts, and made use of to the Disadvantage of our own Country.

For the Residence of this Society, I cannot think any Place more proper than *Greenwich* Hospital, in which they may have Thirty Apartments fitted up for them, that they may make their Observations in private, and meet once a Day in the painted Hall to compare them.

If

If the Establishment of this Society be thought a Matter of too much Importance to be deferred till the New Buildings are finished, it will be necessary to make Room for their Reception, by the Expulsion of such of the Seamen as have no Pretensions to the Settlement there, but fractured Limbs, Loss of Eyes, or decayed Constitutions, who have lately been admitted in such Numbers, that it is now scarce possible to accommodate a Nobleman's Groom, Footman, or Postilion in a Manner suitable to the Dignity of his Profession, and the original Design of the Foundation,

The Situation of *Greenwich* will naturally dispose them to Reflection and Study; and particular Caution ought to be used, lest any Interruption be suffered to dissipate their Attention, or distract their Meditations: For this Reason, all Visits and Letters from Ladies are strictly to be prohibited; and if any of the Members shall be detected with a Lap-dog, Pack of Cards, Box of Dice, Draught-table, Snuff-box,

or

nefit, without Regard to any Party ; I in-
 treat all Sects, Factions, and Distinctions
 of Men among us, to lay aside for a Time
 their Party-feuds and petty Animofities,
 and by a warm Concurrence on this urgent
 Occafion, teach Pofterity to facrifice every
 private Intereft to the Advantage of their
 Country.

F I N I S.



